

Economics Internship Program - FAQs

Below you'll find answers to frequently asked questions about the Economics Internship Program (EIP).

What is an internship?

An internship is an activity that formally integrates academic study with practical experience in a cooperating organization. The internship may be paid or unpaid, on- or off-campus, part-time or full-time. Internships can be in business, non-profit, government, or other settings relevant to the student's academic pursuits. In any case, internships should involve closely monitored and structured work that complements the student's academic experience.

What are the benefits of doing an internship?

There are many benefits to doing an internship. Internships give students a chance to experience a real working environment, apply their economics knowledge, learn new skills, engage in professional networking, and test out a career path.

Can graduate students do Econ internships for academic credit?

Yes. The Econ Department offers Econ 285, a graduate-level internship course, for our graduate students.

What kinds of internships do Econ students do?

Econ students engage in a wide variety of internships. They work with for-profits, non-profits, schools, universities, government organizations, and even other SJSU departments. Because economics involves decision-making, cost-benefit analysis and allocation of scarce resources such as time and money, nearly all human activity involves economic thinking. Regardless of your job description, economics likely plays a role.

I don't have an internship, but I want one. What should I do?

The process of getting an internship is very similar to searching for and securing a job. Most students begin by simply looking through internship openings. Occasionally students will begin by approaching particular organizations that they want to work for, and inquire about the possibility of designing an internship or project there. One strategy to find organizations that hire economists is to search the Job Openings for Economists page on the American Economic Association webpage. Although those listing tend to be for Ph.D. economists, an organization that hires Ph.D. economists may also be interested in hiring economics interns. Regardless of the approach, the process of searching for internships, applying, interviewing, and getting an offer will likely take several weeks, if not months.

Where else should I look for internship opportunities?

We recommend the [SJSU Career Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/careercenter/) <http://www.sjsu.edu/careercenter/>. You should also chat with people within your network, including your SJSU instructors, and let them know what you are looking for, just in case they know of any opportunities in your chosen field.

How many units can I get for my internship?

One unit is equivalent to 50 hours of approved internship work. Undergraduate interns can enroll in up to 4 units of Econ 185. Graduate students can enroll in Econ 285, our graduate level 3-unit internship course.

I've got an internship! Now can I get some units for it?

First you'll need to make sure that your internship qualifies. Contact the Economics Department Chair and/or the instructor offering ECON 185/285 directly. Be prepared to describe what you'll be doing on the internship, and how it relates to (and builds on) what you are learning in your economics classes.

To ensure a smooth application process, it's a good idea to check in with the Chair and 185/285 instructor before you initiate your search.

I've got an internship but it is not paid. What should I do?

Some organizations believe that if a student is receiving academic credit for the internship then they don't need to be paid. From our perspective, unpaid internships shift the risk assessment from the employer to the Economics Department. So, although we will consider allowing you to use an unpaid internship as a part of your ECON 185/285 course, we prefer that students find paid internships. Please read <https://csyou.calstate.edu/Divisions-Orgs/academic-affairs/off-campus-academic-activities/Pages/frequently-asked-questions.aspx> for more information.

I've got an internship and I've already worked ## hours. Can I count those?

No, unfortunately not. Students can only start counting internship hours for academic credit after they have successfully submitted their EIP paperwork and have been accepted into the EIP program. Hours cannot be counted retroactively.

I'd like to enroll. Can I have an add code?

You cannot have an add code until you have successfully completed the EIP application. Add codes are issued only after applications have been formally approved. To get your internship formally approved, contact the Chair or the ECON 185/285 instructor. After successfully submitting the completed application, you'll receive instructions on getting an add code.

What is the required EDIP paperwork?

All students who want to participate in EIP must complete the EIP Learning Plan (LP). International studies must also submit the CPT form to ISSS. Upon completion of the internship the student must submit a five-page paper to the ECON 185/285 instructor.

Can I enroll in the internship units for Summer/Winter?

Generally, no. The internship courses (Econ 185 and 285) are usually only offered during the Fall and Spring semesters. *However, you can still do an approved internship over the Summer or Winter semester.* You'll follow the normal steps of getting your internship approved by the Internship Director. As you do the internship you'll regularly complete and submit all of the assignments. Then, in the very next Fall or Spring semester, you will be officially enrolled in the class for credit during that semester.

I already did an internship. Can I get credit for it even though it's over?

No. Unfortunately we cannot retroactively offer credit for past internships.

I currently have a job. Can I get some internship units?

Generally speaking students cannot use their jobs for EIP units. Students may, however, propose a new project for completion at their current place of employment, as long as it goes beyond their ordinary work responsibilities and clearly involves utilization of your economic knowledge and/or skills.

I've got my internship, and I'm enrolled in my Econ internship units. Now what?

As with any other class, you'll be doing assignments throughout the semester for your internship units. To receive academic credit for your internship you must satisfactorily complete these assignments. Note that you'll do these assignments *in addition to* the work you do on your internship.

What do I have to do to pass my internship units?

The most important step towards receiving a passing grade for your internship units is to complete the number of hours you've contracted for. If you signed up for 1 unit, you must complete 50 hours of approved internship work. If you signed up for 2 units, you must complete 100 hours of approved internship work, and so on.

If you do not complete your contracted number of hours, you will not pass the units and you won't receive academic credit for your internship. In addition to completing your hours, you must also complete and submit the EIP assignments in a timely manner, according to the stated deadlines. Currently this is a five-page paper due on the last instructional day of the semester.

I completed my internship. Is there anything else I need to do?

Congratulations! Please help us spread the word about EIP, and let us know if you'd like to recommend your organization to future internship students.